

# *Documents on Diplomacy: The Source*

## *An "Amazing" Revolution*

*Ambassador Francis to the Secretary, American Embassy in Petrograd, March 18, 1917*

**T**he six days between last Sunday and this have witnessed the most amazing revolution. A Nation of two hundred million people who have lived under absolute monarchy for more than one thousand years and who are now engaged in the greatest war ever waged have forced their Emperor to abdicate for himself and his heir and have induced his brother to whom he transferred the Imperial Authority to accept it on condition that a constituent assembly of the people so request and when so accepted to exercise its functions under authority of the Government framed by that assembly.

This is official information obtained by my personal unofficial calls to-day on Rodzianko at his residence and Milioukov, Minister for Foreign Affairs, at his office. No opposition to Provisional Government which is Council of Ministers appointed by committee of twelve named by the Duma. Absolute quiet prevails here and throughout Russia so far as known. Rodzianko and Milioukov both assure me that the entire army, accepts the authority of Provisional Government and all appearances and advices confirm same Plan of provisional Government is to call a constituent assembly or convention whose members will be elected by the whole people and empowered to organize a good government Whether that will be republic or constitutional monarchy is not decided but the conclusions of the assembly will be accepted universally and enforced by the army and navy.

No concerted action in diplomatic conference; no meeting held or called. It has been customary for British, French and Italian Ambassadors to call daily together at the Foreign Office and they called upon Mihoukov Friday, yesterday and to-day but have not formally recognized the Provisional Government. Mihoukov tells me confidentially that Buchanan has authority from his Government for recognition but is waiting till Italian and French Ambassadors are likewise authorized. I request respectfully that you promptly give me authority to recognize Provisional Government as first recognition is desirable from every viewpoint. This revolution is the practical realization of that principle of government which we have championed and advocated, I mean government by consent of the governed. Our recognition will have a stupendous moral effect especially if given first. Rodzianko and Milioukov both assure me that provisional Government will vigorously prosecute the war; furthermore upon Russia's success against the Central Empires absolutely depends the salvation of the revolution and the perpetuity of the government it establishes. The third of the eight principles in the manifesto issued announcing the new Ministry and signed by the President of the Duma and all of the ministers is, "abolition all class, religious and national limitations."

Answer.

FRANCIS

### *Source*

United States Department of State, *United States Department of State/ Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1917. with the address of the President to Congress, December 4, 1917, pp. 1207-1208*

<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=turn&entity=FRUS.FRUS1917.p1373&id=FRUS.FRUS1917&isize=XL&q1=March%2020,%201917>